

Remarks

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-13 remain pending in the application. Claims 1-3 are independent and Claims 2 and 3 have been amended herein.

Claims 1-5, 8-10, 12, and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,109,746 (Jeanmaire et al.) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,234,625 (Wen), and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,398,357 (Holloway et al.). Claim 6 was rejected under § 103 as being unpatentable over Jeanmaire et al., Wen, and Holloway et al., in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,059,407 (Komatsu et al.). Claim 7 was rejected under § 103 as being unpatentable over Jeanmaire et al., Wen, and Holloway et al., in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,318,853 (Asano et al.). Claim 11 was rejected under § 103 as being unpatentable over Jeanmaire et al., Wen, and Holloway et al., in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,623,816 (Tanikawa et al.). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

With the claimed methods, three liquids or materials can be applied in order to an intermediate transfer medium. In Claims 1 and 2, for example, the first liquid increases the wettability of a surface of the intermediate transfer medium. The second liquid is for decreasing the flowability of an ink, reacting with the ink, or aggregating a coloring material in the ink. The third liquid or material is the ink itself. Since the first

liquid is applied prior to application of the second liquid, beading of the second liquid on the intermediate transfer medium can be suppressed. This results in reducing potential deterioration of an image caused by such beading.

Jeanmaire et al. can apply a plurality of fluids such as an ink precursor, a reactant, a diluent, an agent, etc., in a variety of orders of application. However, none of the fluids can be construed as corresponding to the first liquid recited in the claims of the instant application. That is, none of the ink precursor, reactant, diluent or agent can be said to increase the wettability of a surface of an intermediate transfer medium, as is recited in independent Claims 1 and 2, or can be said to contain a surfactant applied to an intermediate transfer medium having a surface containing at least one material from among a fluororubber and a silicone rubber, as is recited in independent Claim 3.

Thus, Jeanmaire et al. fails to disclose or suggest important features of the present invention recited in the independent claims.

Wen describes a printing apparatus and states that different treatment fluids can be used for improving different aspects of printing properties. Examples of the treatment fluid include a hydrophobic fluid and a fluid containing polymers and binder material. Wen does not disclose or suggest the treatment fluid being for increasing the wettability of the surface of the intermediate transfer medium or containing a surfactant, with the intermediate transfer medium having a surface containing at least one material from among a fluororubber and a silicone rubber. While Wen describes applying a treatment fluid before applying ink, Wen is not believed to remedy the deficiencies of

Jeanmaire et al., noted above with respect to independent Claims 1-3.

Holloway et al. is directed to an ink jet printing method using an ink containing a wetting agent. A liquid coating solution is applied to the drum before the drum reaches the printheads. The liquid coating solution increases the transfer efficiency to the paper so that all of the ink is transferred from the drum to the paper. There is no disclosure in Holloway et al. that the liquid coating solution increases the wettability of the surface of the intermediate medium or contains a surfactant. Holloway et al. does not disclose applying any liquid before the liquid coating solution. Accordingly, Holloway et al. also fails to remedy the deficiencies of the citations noted above with respect to the independent claims.

The remaining citations have been reviewed, but are not believed to be any more relevant than those discussed above.

Thus, independent Claims 1-3 are patentable over the citations of record. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 103 rejections are respectfully requested.

This Amendment After Final Rejection is an earnest attempt to advance prosecution and reduce the number of issues, and is believed to clearly place this application in condition for allowance. This Amendment was not earlier presented because Applicants earnestly believed that the prior Amendment placed the subject application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, entry of this Amendment under 37 CFR 1.116 is respectfully requested.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the present

invention is patentably defined by Claims 1-3. Dependent Claims 4-13 are also allowable, in their own right, for defining features of the present invention in addition to those recited in independent Claim 2. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is requested.

Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowability are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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